



→ Bindings of the six carte de visite albums in the collection of the Delaware County Historical Society, Chester, PA.  
From left to right : Mosely album, "Oriental" album, "Gutekunst" album, unmarked Joseph Baker family album, Baker album, Lydia W. Eyre 1864 album.  
Photograph by Donald W. Powell.

→ THE NINETEENTH CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTIONS AT THE DELAWARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, CHESTER, PA : I, carte de visite albums

Donald W. Powell

The carte de visite photograph was the first form of paper photograph to be widely available in America. The form was patented in France in 1854 by Adolphe Eugene Disdéri, and by 1860 the form had been universally adopted in America for portraiture. The name refers to the similarity of the size of the carte de visite ( a paper print 2 1/4" to 2 3/8" by 3 3/4" to 4" on a mount measuring 2 1/4" X 4" ) to the size of the common visiting card. The craze for carte de visite portrait photographs in America lasted for about 20 years, from roughly 1860 to roughly 1880. Carte de visite photographs were normally kept in albums which were specially manufactured to hold them.

Over the course of the Summer of 1983, when it became known to Sandy Bullock and Jim Muzyk that I was particularly interested in locating whatever carte de visite albums might be in the possession of the Library, they, with their enormous enthusiasm, unfailing sense of responsibility, meticulous attention to detail, and absolute dependability to every task they undertake, located the following six carte de visite albums which belong to the Delaware County Historical Society. In subsequent issues of this Bulletin more will be said about the extremely interesting and quite precious contents of these albums.

The Joseph Baker family albums

These three albums were stored together at the Society, and they on June 23, 1983, shown to me by Sandy Bullock and opened by me in the presence of Nancy Webster and Tina Storkovich. Inside the front cover of Album # 2 ( BAKER; upper center in top photograph ) was inserted an envelope addressed to :

Mr. Chester Baker, Crozier Building, Chester, PA  
postmarked : MEDIA, PA Mar 11, 1936 2:30 PM

On the back of the envelope is the following message :

Place this in front of "Baker" albums ( 1 of 3 ) left recently with you. Jim Chinchilla wants \$3.00 for these 3 albums. They are of the Joseph Baker family ( plumber ) who used to reside on E. 9th St. near Potter St.

B. 3/12/36

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|--------------|---|
| 1. Album # 1 | cover imprinted LYDIA W. EYRE 1864                                |
| 2. Album # 2 | cover imprinted BAKER   |
| 3. Album # 3 | unmarked, album coming apart at binding ( now in 3 or so pieces ) |

At the beginning of August, 1983, three more albums were located in the storage on the third floor of Wolfram Library

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| 4. Album # 4 | unmarked cover ; page facing inside of front cover inscribed :<br>Mary S. Mosley<br>A slight token of the affection of<br>her loving Brother<br>John B. Mosley   |
| 5. Album # 5 | unmarked cover; inside bears no inscription<br>Since 43 of the 44 cartes in this album are of Orientals ( Chinese and Japanese ? ) or were taken by Hong Kong photographers we shall hereinafter refer to this album as the "Oriental" album |
| 6. Album # 6 | cover unmarked; inside bears no inscription<br>Since 15 of the 22 cartes in this album were taken by F. Gutekunst, 704 & 706 Arch Street, Philadelphia, we shall hereinafter refer to this album as the "Gutekunst" album.                   |

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